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FRESNO MUSICIAN PLEADS GUILTY TO METH CONSPIRACY

FRESNO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that JESUS TORRES GOMEZ, 30, a Fresno singer who goes by the professional name El Melon Norteño, entered a guilty plea to conspiring to distribute and possess with intent to distribute approximately one-half pound of methamphetamine and three pounds of crystal methamphetamine. His brother and co-conspirator, BARDOMIO GARCIA GOMEZ, 23, also pled guilty to participating in the conspiracy.

The case was the result of a six-month investigation by the Fresno Resident Office of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Fresno Police Department.

The GOMEZ brothers admitted their guilt on December 12 before U.S. District Judge Oliver W. Wanger. In their plea agreements and other documents filed with the court, both brothers acknowledged that on January 5, 2005, JESUS TORRES GOMEZ sold approximately one-half pound of methamphetamine to a confidential informant for \$3,000. Four days later, JESUS TORRES GOMEZ sold approximately three pounds of crystal methamphetamine to the informant for \$22,500. BARDOMIO GARCIA GOMEZ was present during the delivery, after he obtained the drug at the direction of his brother.

According to the DEA, crystal methamphetamine, or "ice," is a purer, more potent form of methamphetamine. Over the past ten years, its use has increased dramatically in much of the country, especially the Midwest. The name is derived from the drug's appearance, that of clear, large chunky crystals resembling rock candy.

JESUS TORRES GOMEZ has recorded several albums and sings mainly at weddings and other events.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Karen A. Escobar of the Fresno United States Attorney's Office, who is prosecuting the case, the GOMEZ brothers faces a mandatory minimum prison term of ten years and a maximum of life, and a fine of up to \$4,000,000 for the conspiracy conviction.

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